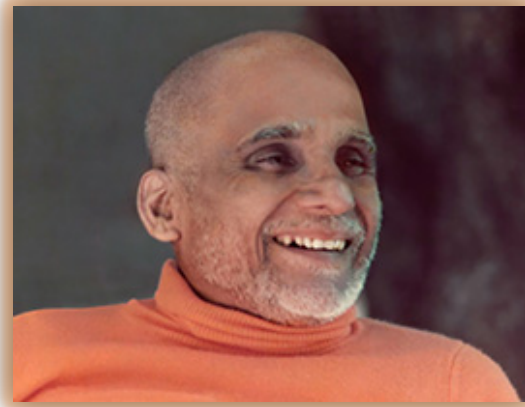


# SELF-REALISATION: ITS MEANING AND METHOD



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## **ABOUT THIS EDITION**

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## PREFACE

“Know thyself and be free” —this perennial wisdom-teaching rings the eternal message of the ageless quest of all creation-bound fields of self-awareness, whether these be persons, things or whatever evolving species. The character of ‘self’ ingrained everywhere and in everything explains loves as well as hatreds, war as well as peace, stasis as well as dynamis, life as well as death. But for the assertion of an inscrutable and transcendent apperception and non-objective consciousness playing hide and seek and masquerading through all forms of existence, perpetually, the drama of the universe would not have remained that eluding mystery which it purports to be and has been for ever and ever. Here is an attempt to ponder over this most essential of all needs, this pressing call from within and without and from all sides in the life of everyone.

The contents of this book form the subject of five lectures addressed to seekers in the Ashram of The Divine Life Society, some years back, and it is hoped that these suggestions will do some good to many a searching spirit.

—Swami Krishnananda  
25<sup>th</sup> April, 1994

## CHAPTER 1

The few words that I shall be trying to speak today are intended specially to be of some benefit to those who are not accustomed to the usual Indian concept of the liberation of the Spirit, call it Self-Realisation, or God-Realisation. While, generally, the citizens of India may be considered to be fairly acquainted with a general notion of what liberation, or the aim of life is, though there may be some, even in India, whose idea about the supreme purpose of life may not be perfect and perspicacious, yet it appears to me that there is a greater misconstruing of the very meaning of the aim of life in certain countries like Europe and America or what you call the jurisdiction of Western culture. The word Self-Realisation is commonly used in spiritual circles, and is often identified with what is known as God-Realisation. In spite of this common usage of what should be regarded as the principal motive behind every human endeavour, there is likely to be the possibility of the intrusion of the human way of thinking even in regard to what is totally transcendent to human reaches. It is an inveterate involvement in the human vision of things that should be regarded as responsible for reading human meaning even in what you may consider as God-Almighty.

Now, the human way of thinking has certain specific characteristics: Firstly it is involved in the concept of spatial extension and distance, and the notion of temporal succession, process and movement, activity and effort, work and achievement of the result or fruit of work. There is no other way in which the human mind can normally

think. But to stretch this logic of what one may call the three-dimensional way of thinking, thinking in terms of distance and spatial difference, thinking in terms of temporal process or a terminus calculated by the movement of time, much worse, to think always in terms of human needs only, and not to pay any attention to the possibility of there being things in the world other than human—may be more important than human—should be a matter of concern for everyone.

What on earth does anyone mean by Self-Realisation? What do you mean by God-Realisation? We, with all the stretches of our intelligent imagination, cannot but be human. The human foibles and weaknesses are not merely confined to what we call desires and aversions, likes and dislikes, prejudice, passion and anger. These are, no doubt, weaknesses, but there are more subtle weaknesses which pass for the wisdom of life. There are more dangerous troubles to life in the world than the usually well-known wickednesses which are listed in our catalogues and available in the notification given to us through the scriptures. But the more dangerous and surreptitious intrusions of invisible forms of weakness in human thought are to be a greater matter for our concern than merely an effort to get rid of likes, dislikes, ego, prejudice, etc., which are all publicly known. There are difficulties which are not so well known, and cannot so easily be known also, because these weaknesses are the very constituents of the individuality of man. Man is made up of these weaknesses only, and, therefore, he has no avenue to discover the existence of these weaknesses. The components of human

thought are themselves involved in these fundamental weaknesses and, therefore, human thought cannot be permitted entry for any investigation into these matters which concern its own makeup, the very building bricks of its existence itself. These matters are serious in the light of the fact that they are the final barriers, the checkpoints, the *chungis*, which will put to set our hard-earned advantages through the austerities and the *Sadhanas* we perform to the extent of our knowledge and capacity.

The concept of Self-Realisation can stir up divine visions and a highly balanced outlook of life, a sober approach to every event and factor in life, a policy of impersonality in regard to any kind of encounter in the world. Yes, this is fine, and this can be there, and this is sometimes there. But there can also be something else. John Bunyan in his beautiful work, "The Pilgrim's Progress," says in a fine passage that even when you are sure that you are at the gate of heaven itself, you are likely to step into a pit there which can lead to hell at the very gate to heaven. This pit to hell is nothing but the natural incapacity to overcome the human interpretation of the nature of God's existence. And what is this human interpretation? That God also is positioned in this universe, something like a large individual, though He may be as large as this universe itself. Nevertheless, He is there, somewhere, as we are also here. Now, it is not true that God is somewhere sitting, though we may not be able to understand why it should be so. That we cannot escape the notion of God being somewhere sitting in some position, whatever be the extent of His personality, is related to our spatial way of thinking.

God may be in heaven, in *Brahmaloka*, He may be in the highest possible universality and comprehensiveness of being, yet, He is 'somewhere.' The *is-ness* of God 'somewhere' creates a subtle difference between the location in which we are and the location to which we attach God. This notwithstanding the fact that we are honest in conceding an all-encompassing universality to God's existence. Our honesty is one hundred per cent, and we agree that God is universal, is everywhere, and, therefore, He is everything, and at all times. But, still, I am also here conceiving this universality of God, and that the permission granted to God's universality will not permit our existence does not occur to our minds. This is a fright to many of even the philosophers, both in the East and the West.

I had a discussion with some brilliant professors of philosophy come from America, well-known teachers of metaphysics, who have written good histories of philosophy. And one of the thinkers whom I had the occasion to meet here was a professor of philosophy from the Cornell University. He mentioned to me during the course of our discussion, "What good is there in such liberation? What point is there in the attainment of God if it means the cessation of the very existence of the seeker of God himself? Who is benefiting? The one who seeks benefit out of God's experience, or God-experience, you say, will not be there. If the seeker of God is not to be there, who is seeking God?" This is a general difficulty with Western thinking, and it persists even today, and it cannot but



persist as long as man is man. Some theologians in the East also have this difficulty.

Here is a point which may be relevant to earnest *Sadhakas* and seekers who come especially from Western countries, not necessarily professors from universities. There are sincere souls coming from the West, and they are sincere in their search for the finality of God's Being, the end of human endeavour. But, the spatio-temporal vision of things does not easily take leave, so that there can even be a hard core of conviction within these sincere souls that there is some onerous duty that they have to perform even after entry into the bosom of God. The entry into the universality of God which we call liberation is only a permit that is granted to man for working greater wonders in this world, miracles, perhaps even to the extent of larger services to the human brethren. Again, we are in the midst of human brethren only. We rose from them and we have come back to them after having dipped ourselves in the light and ocean of God's Being. This is not merely a philosophical mistake or a metaphysical handicap, it may end in a breakdown of the human personality which is in search of God. These subtle empirical intrusions into the final goal of life may, of course, not lead to that realisation, but may do something worse, from which it may be good for everyone of us to guard ourselves, namely, a breakdown of the whole nervous system and a disappointment with life itself, a disgust with existence in this world, and a sense of negation of any meaning in life. There have been honest souls who have finally found that life has no meaning, that it is a total idiocy. "It brings nothing, it can give nothing,

and all these pursuits are a pursuit of the will-o'-the-wisp, a phantasmagoria, an illusion, a fear-born delusion risen like a devil in the mind of man, a brain-washed education which has ruined my life.” With these notions the sincere seeker may leave this world because of an erroneous notion about God’s nature, the purpose behind the very reason in the search for God, and what actually could happen to one in God-Realisation.

It is difficult to believe that many of us have a clear notion as to what will happen if God-Realisation is to be our blessing. What will happen to us? You may scratch your head up to the core of your cerebrum, but you will not find an easy answer to this terrible question: What will happen to me after I attain God? You will have a hundred answers from a thousand people, all confusing and contradicting one another, leaving you at sea finally and landing you nowhere. This is a predicament we may escape if we have a competent guide. These days we feel that libraries are our *Gurus*, and travelling also brings experience. Well, this may be true in some percentage, but this is not a final support. Because, whatever be the extent of your study through books and encounter with personages in the various cultures of the world through your itineraries or tours—though they may be cultural tours—you will find that you are the interpreter of the books and you will see in these books only what you want to see, and you will not see there what you do not want to see. You go to these libraries and you go on tours round *Ashramas* and universities with some spectacles which you have manufactured for yourselves. These spectacles will

determine the way of your vision of things and these mental glasses will also decide what you will read in these books. You will read only what is capable of being received by your mind through these specs that you have put on, and nothing else will come to you because you have become your own judge, you have become your own teacher, you have agreed to be your own *Guru*, finally, and many a young man feels that his judgement can be a final judgement. "What is wrong with them? I do not believe that the suggestions given to me should be wholly accepted. I feel and think and argue in this way and these ways of my thinking and arguing seem to be my ways." So, a situation has arisen in the modern educated mind, where it considers itself as its own sole support, guide, friend, philosopher, and no other suggestion is acceptable. And even if any suggestion is given, instruction is imparted or knowledge is communicated, it will be received, through these specs, these mental glasses which condition everything that is communicated in any way. They will be sifted according to the idiosyncrasies, the background of education and the social circumstances of the person.

Self-Realisation is not an easy thing to achieve, because the notion of the Self is a barrier and a handicap. What do you mean by the Self when you speak of Self-Realisation? Where is this Self situated? "It is within me." This is a usual glib answer available for any person. "I seek to know my own Self." And why do I seek to know my own Self? Because I want to live in peace. What do you mean by peace? No answer can be given. Here, again, we are in a state of confusion. Why do you want Self-Realisation? To

know my own Self. Why do you want to know your own Self? To be in a state of balance in my mind and outlook. What for is this effort? To be peaceful. What is peace? That cannot be answered. We do not know what this peace means, about which people talk so much and which is the theme of the various rostrums in the parliaments of cultural discussion the world over, which are taking place from Peru to China! But, what is this Self? While you may say, 'it is within me,' and this may appear to satisfy the person who has put this question, you will be sure that it does not satisfy even your own selves. There is no use merely saying 'the Self is within me and that is my God.' We have a curious notion of Self and God, indeed. It is within you! When you say, 'the Self is within me,' what do you mean by this 'me'? What is this 'me' or the 'I'? Again, the same question arises. Here, again, we are bodily shackled. We are men and women, we are human, and we cannot be anything else. So this 'within' in which the Self seems to be situated is the 'within' 'this body.' You have confined the notion of yourself to your bodily existence finally, though your intention is to break through the barriers of bodily consciousness in search for the Self. The thief has subtly entered through the back door, while you are keeping police and army at the front door to prevent an entry of the dacoits. They have come through the back door and they have done their work, because the Self which is supposed to be the means to break through the barriers of bodily consciousness has confined itself to the body only, again, for, when the Self is *within*, it cannot be but *within the body*. If it is not within the body, within what is it, when

you say that it is within? Here is a difficulty before you. Many of the books will not answer this pose. If God is not within, where else is God? And if you say that He is within, within what? Within the body? You are caught again by the very answer that you are giving, which is supposed to be the solution to your problems.

There is also another difficulty that you may have to face. What will you do after Self-Realisation takes place? You may tell me, How can this question arise? It certainly arises and it cannot be escaped by most people because we are bound to the action-ridden world. The world is nothing but a field of activity. We do, and do, and do, and work, and work, and we have nothing else of meaning in life except action, doing something, working. So, naturally, the greatest meaning of life being working, doing, acting and moving towards achievement of something, that being the final meaning, that meaning cannot be abrogated even in what we may call God-Realisation. A heightened form of work may be the advantage we gain after God-Realisation! The Realisation of the Self or the Realisation of God will give me greater strength to work more in this world than I am capable of at present. I may be able to do a greater service to the people than at present. I may live a longer life. I may not die at all after the blessing of God is received. This individual immortality sanctioned to me by the achievement of the Self or the attainment of God will give me such suzerainty over the world that I shall be the master of all things and I shall be a wonder-worker.

Why should not these difficulties present themselves before us? And many of us may have a subtle reason for

justifying these arguments. What will I do after the attainment of God? That there is nothing to do after the attainment of God will either make the person go crazy or just give up the pursuit itself, because if nothing is going to be done and nothing is going to happen to me after the attainment of God, it will be a vegetating condition of silent inactivity, a meaningless rotting in a totally void and valueless outcome. These are dangers that are at the back of the human mind. The Self-Realisation that we are speaking of is inconceivable to the human mind, because most of the knowledge that we have is book-born, lecture-born and contact-born by association with varieties of people. It has not come to us through a competent master, whom we have not had the patience to serve.

The ancient system of service of the Guru is not an old-fashioned story or dogma. It is the only way by which the mind can be purified. These difficulties and problems, a specimen of which I am placing before you (there are many others also), are due to impurity of the mind, the non-receptivity of the mind to the entry of Truth in its nakedness. These impurities of the mind are not merely the likes and dislikes and egoisms we are well aware of, but are the very conditions of thinking which prevent true thinking in terms of non-temporal facts. How do I achieve these means by which I can free myself from the shackle of temporal thinking and spatial envisioning? By the service of the Guru, is the answer. What do you mean by service of the Guru? These things are not considered fashionable these days, because we are under the impression that we are over-educated individuals, highly cultured and more

broad-minded, advanced in everything, so that we are certainly capable of thinking for ourselves, and we can stand on our own rational and intellectual legs; we do not have to stand on somebody's feet even if they be the feet of the Guru. Nothing can be a greater blunder in thinking than to think in this manner. The service of the Guru is not an old-fashioned system, and it is indeed the system that will prevail and work even today, and it has to work for all time; because the Guru is not to be regarded as a person, though for all outward vision the Guru may look like any person. There is certainly a mistake in our evaluation of the Guru. The Guru physically, from the point of view of a photographic camera, may look like you, and may not be different from you in any way, from the point of view of the physical contours, but he represents a principle which is wider than you and your individuality. The Guru is not a person, he is not a man or woman; he is a principle which represents a power behind and beyond the visible framework which you call the body of the Guru. There is an aura which is spread by the mentality and the vision of the Guru. That aura is the area which he occupies, and the location of the existence of the Guru is as wide as the reach of his own aura, just as the location of a government official is as wide as the jurisdiction over which he has authority and power. The person will be sitting on a chair like any other, but he is not merely limited to the chair. His power, his capacity and his knowledge in terms of action extend to that limit of space over which he has control and responsibility. In a similar way, we may say that the jurisdiction of the Guru is as wide as the distance of the

aura which emanates from him, and, again, to repeat, *the Guru is a principle and not a person*. And, therefore, to look upon the Guru as a person and then to judge him as you judge anybody else in the world, and to take his word or not to take it from your own point of view, would be to cut the ground from under your own feet.

The purification of the mind is of paramount importance before you study books and imagine that you are on the pedestal of heightened thinking, perhaps on the way to God Himself. To be on the way to God is an immense blessing, nothing can be a more glorious achievement than that—but who can be on the way to God? Which man, which woman, which individual can be sure that he or she is on the way to God, if this humility characteristic of an utter submission to a higher authority, which is the divine principle manifesting itself, is not to be discovered in one's own self? Many seekers who thought they were after God had disappointment towards the end of their lives.

The realisation of God is mostly identified with the realisation of the Self. And I have no time just now to describe to you why the two should be considered as one and the same thing, while there are others who will portray these two processes in a different way. There is no need to go further deep into these quibbles of academic difference made between Self and God, etc. For all practical purposes, from the point of view of the actual needs of *Sadhana* we may conclude that Self-Realisation is virtually the same as what we call God-Realisation. But this is a very difficult issue with which one can with hardship reconcile oneself.



We have, again, here the inveterate conviction that the Self is 'within' 'me', well, that may be God. Where is God? The answer is, 'God is within;' whose 'within?' As pointed out, this concept of 'within' is a tantalising thing; one cannot say, where is this 'within' and 'within which person' is God sitting? We may, of course, say, 'within everybody.' Here is a subtle difficulty that may be posed before you once again. That which is within everything is inconceivable to the mind, because that which is within everything has lost the very meaning of 'within,' because you have conceded that it is within everything; therefore, not 'within me only.' Hence, the word 'within' may not apply to God. You cannot also say that God is without. That which is within has also to be without if you conclude that it is within everybody. But that which is within cannot be without, and that which is without cannot be within, and if you say that it is both within and without, your mind will stop thinking. We do not know what we are speaking about. Here is a matter for decision only by a competent master. How are we to encounter in our consciousness that which is the Self, which is God, which is within, which is without, and yet not within and not without? How are we going to think of this? How are we to conceive this? The difficulty in conceiving and entertaining the consciousness of this mystery arises, again, due to the impurities of the mind which we have not got rid of by humble service. I repeat, again, that this is not an old-fashioned system. There is no other way than to be submissive and humble before the might of this tremendous mystery we call God, we call the Self.

There is no end to this process, and the concept of end and terminus also arises on account of the notion of space and time. Someone told me the other day, ‘after all, this effort has to end.’ Why does this idea of end arise in the mind? The end notion arises because of the beginning notion. And notions of beginning and end arise because of the notion of time. God created the world sometime in ancient past—so do we believe. Then, by ‘ancient past’ we mean, again, some beginning of time, though we believe that God is beyond time. Therefore, to calculate the point of the creation of the world at some origin of time would be to defy our acceptance earlier that God is not in time. These are the difficulties, and why do they arise? Why should these difficulties harass us? They all vanish in a second like mist before the sun if the mind is pure. And what is purity of mind? It is the ability to accept simply, humbly and honestly that our knowledge and power is not adequate to the purpose and to accept at the same time that there are powers more than we. We are not the final explanation of things. Whatever education we may be imparted is insufficient here. The great master was approached, even in unthinkable past, by students who were themselves far superior to most us.

Narada, the renowned sage, humbly approached Sanatkumara. Do you think Narada was an unlearned person, an uneducated being? There was no science, no art in which he was not proficient, and no wonder and miracle that he could not work. Such a person devoutly went in submission to the master, Sanatkumara. Where was the need? Indra, the ruler of the gods, who can strike threat and

wonder and miracle anywhere, went humbly to Prajapati for knowledge. The Upanishads are interesting demonstrative narrations before us of a series of masters themselves approaching greater masters.

You must have read of the six great men approaching a master, as related to us in the Chhandogya Upanishad. There were five *Brahmanishthas*, the Upanishad calls so those established in Brahman, not mediocres, not ordinary students—even such people had difficulties. They were meditators on the Atman. They were seekers of the Self. They were after Self-Realisation. But where is the Self? The difficulty naturally arose in their minds. Ah! Where is this Self? One of them asked the other. We are all meditators of the Atman, but where is the Atman? If we do not know where It is, how are we to meditate on It? How are we to conceive It? Five people joined together. They went to a sixth person who was a reputed teacher in the village. But this reputed teacher himself was flabbergasted at these queries. He said, “My dear friends, I am in the same boat as you. I am, too, a meditator on the Atman, to the best of my ability, but I cannot tell you where the Atman is. Let us go to the king of this country. He is known as a master in this *Vidya*. He is an adept meditator, let us go to him.” We had in ancient India, a tradition of the four classes of people known as *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya*, etc. The *Kshatriya* is the second category, the *Brahmana* is of the first order. The *Kshatriya* learns from the *Brahmana*, but the *Brahmana* will not learn from the *Kshatriya*. But all these great gentlemen, the seekers of the Atman, were *Brahmanas* and the king was a *Kshatriya*. You will be surprised at the

humility with which these Brahmanas went, contrary to the accepted social tradition that a Brahmana will not learn from a *Kshatriya*. But when these great men went to the king, he thought that they had come for some wealth, because Brahmanas were mostly financially not so well off as the emperors were, and it was the gesture of the king to give charity to all such men as one of his duties. The king said, "Well, I am performing a sacrifice tomorrow, and I shall engage you, and you shall receive the largest benefit." "We have not come for that, your Highness." "What for have you come?" "Tell us what you know—we seek nothing else." "Is this not contrary to tradition, great men, that Brahmanas should come and ask this question with a *Kshatriya*?" They were good and considerate and generous enough to openly say, "We have not come as Brahmanas, we have come as students, and we regard you not as a *Kshatriya*, but as a master of knowledge." And, giving a special concession to the learning and sincerity of these six people, he did not put them to the rack of the disciplines to which students would be subjected usually before initiation is given. "Come tomorrow, I shall see what can be done," he said. And you know how the story went and what questions were put by the king, what answers came from each one, and how each of the methods of meditation carried and conducted by these different men was examined. There was a flaw which was detected by this master, the king, who was an adept in this *Vidya*. What was the defect? The very same ones to which I made reference, a few minutes before: Where is this Atman? What is Self-Realisation? How would I conceive It? And, finally, what for is this Self-Realisation?

Do not tell me that it is for peace of mind. I have already told you, this is a word which can convey no sense in the end, because no one can say what is peace of mind. It is an un-understood slogan, a shibboleth, whose significance is not clear. What is peace?

However, this is a story which you can read for yourself, and many of you may be acquainted with what I mean, what answers were given by the king. They all pertain to the question of the Self's location and the way of meditation on It. The defect, the mistake, the shortcoming, the lacuna in the meditation of these reputed six great men was that they located the Atman 'somewhere!' It is 'within' or It is 'somewhere.' Now, the point is that the Atman is not 'within,' and It is not 'somewhere,' that both these statements are not correct. So, where is It, if It is not somewhere, and If It is not within? And a subtle answer was given by the master, the emperor who was so approached. Likewise, we have the lives of saints and sages of both the East and the West, who served great men with humility, sometimes even till old age, till their hairs became grey.

We need not be carried away by the complacency common to people that everything is clear to our minds. We will find that while everything seems to be clear now, when we proceed further and further, we will find it gets blurred more and more, until we see an iron hill in front of us, a mountain, a dark curtain which we will not be able to pierce, because the egoism of the individual is already there, which told that everything is clear. Humility is the hallmark of the spiritual seeker, and the guidance of a master is essential.

## CHAPTER 2

We had occasion to consider some of the difficulties in even conceiving what Self-Realisation could be. The difficulties are poignant enough and must have been clear to our minds to some extent by now. The difficulty is simple. It is simple because it concerns our own selves. It is terrific for the same reason. The nearer we come to ourselves, the more intricate does life appear, and the more formidable in its variegated presentations, so that the most frightening element in the world is our own Self. But we call this fear of ourselves a joy that we try to import from that which we are not. Imported goods come from a foreign land to which we do not belong, the world of nature, space, time and objects. These goods which do not belong to us are appropriated by us as supports, when we are drowned in the sea of an inexplicable position that we seem to be occupying in this mysterious atmosphere we call the world. There are countless things in the world which attract our attention, and no one can easily gainsay that the objects of the world are given a greater pre-eminence, prominence and importance than one's own self. The weaker and the lesser the status occupied by one's own self, the greater is the value that one sees in the outer world, so that when you have lost yourself completely, you seek nothing but the world outside. This is total materialism, a matter-of-fact merging of oneself in that which one is not, a negation of the Self in the not-Self. When it is total, literally one-hundred-percent, it becomes the doctrine of the supremacy of matter, so that there is nobody even to think that matter

is, because that one who thinks that matter is, has become part of matter. This is the worst that can happen to anyone, and we people in the world do not seem to be very far from this terrible predicament. The value that human understanding attaches to the world of objects is the touchstone by which we can assess the value of the self of man. To what extent is the world of objects valuable to you? To that extent your value is negated, denied and suppressed. The larger the world before you, the smaller you are; and the grander the world of objects before you, the more ugly you look and meaningless is your existence, because all meaning has been transferred to the world of objects. When all the meaning of life is only in the outer world, there is no meaning in one's own self. The attribution of value and meaning to the world of objects is a simultaneous negation of value to the self. It is utter slavery to matter, and matter is that which consciousness is not. If this is the world in which we are living and this is the life with which we can be satisfied, no one can educate us, because there is, then, no need for an enlightenment called education.

We were broadly discussing the various facets of the problem of the concept of the Self, inasmuch as it has vital relationship with what many a man in the world calls Self-Realisation. "I want Self-Realisation." This is the honest feeling of several seekers who seem to tread the path of what they consider as Truth. We have seen how hard this issue is, this subject is, how easily we can misconstrue the meaning of the Self, and how quickly the erroneous meaning attached to it can be abused for purposes for

which it is not intended, because there are no means available in the world to know what the Self is. We have instruments, but all the instruments belong to the world of Nature, and if the world is not the Self but that which is known by the self, it cannot be organically related to the Self. Hence, the seekers of Self-Realisation or the searchers of the 'Self' are placed in a very difficult position. 'By what means can I apprehend the Self?' 'With my eyes I can see things, with my sense-organs I can contact the things of the world, but with what means can I know the Self?' All the means we can conceive belong to the world external to the Self, and therefore there seems to be nothing which can be of real assistance in one's search for what the Self is, or, rather, where the Self is. We bordered finally upon the difficulty in relying entirely on one's own intellectual capacity, since the intellect is mostly playing second fiddle to the tune of the senses, and it is not always a guide, especially along the further reaches in the adventure of the Spirit. It has a tentative assisting capacity but it halts at a particular border-point, and that border where the intellect will cease functioning, rationality will stop working, is that hair's breadth of distance differentiating consciousness from matter. No one can know how these are differentiated, while one has to accept that the one cannot be the other. Where lies the difference? Where is this borderline between consciousness and matter? There the intellect halts, because the intellect is an equipment which is externally manoeuvred by the operations of space, time, cause, relation, and, therefore, it is a property of the world of Nature, though in a highly rarefied form. Hence, even the



intellect and the reason cannot be regarded as final means in the knowledge of the Self or as equipments for the purpose of Self-Realisation. They have a negative value in telling us what things are not, but what things are, they cannot say. We may say that anything with which we identify ourselves is also our self. It becomes my love when it stands inseparable from my existence. In some mysterious, unknown way, a thing, an object, a person or a condition gets identified with a person, and that is certainly a type of self. One loves as one's own self that with which one has identified oneself—my country, my nation, my people, my community, my husband, my wife, my property, my building, my this, my that. People get worked up into emotions of great intensity oftentimes when they behold interferences in the way of that with which they have identified themselves. The father cannot tolerate interference with his children, and an owner of a property cannot tolerate interference with his property. An interference cannot be tolerated because it is an interference with one's own self. It is 'me' that is present in 'my' land, in 'my' house, in 'my' money, in 'my' friend, in anything which is inseparable from 'me'. I live by it and it lives by me, I swear by it and it swears by me.

The Self is an intriguing something. It is intriguing because it can deceive us into conditions of belief which are totally opposed to fact and reality. This is exactly what is happening to us in the mundane world. The ferocious attachments frantically manifested by people, whether in the cause of a nation, or in the cause of a religion, should be considered as demonstrations of this folly before man, the

great wisecrack, in this world. In a very homely prosaic and visible practical matter-of-fact sense, we may say that the Self is anything from which one cannot be separated and with which one is emotionally bound. When a person is emotionally tied up to a particular object, one does not believe that it is merely an emotional relation. It is not considered at that time as an operation of the psyche within. The consciousness which is the root of one's being jets forth with a tremendous velocity through the operation of the psyche called emotion or feeling and envelops that object which becomes that thing from which one cannot be separated. As sunlight envelops an object and makes it an object of perception, it becomes visible to the eyes. Emotions envelop objects of affection and hatred: positive envelopments are called love, negative forms of the same are called hatred. This is a difficult thing to conceive in our minds because we are no more cognisers of this psychic activity. We stand outside the objects of cognition and perception when we scientifically encounter things in the world, or act as spectators or witnesses of phenomena. But emotional activity is not a phenomenon outside which we can stand as umpires, spectators or witnesses. We ourselves melt into the liquid of emotion and pour ourselves on the object with which we identify ourselves. And as we ourselves have become liquid melted into the form of the enveloping power that has covered the object, we are no more there to see what is happening. We are no more there because we have become liquid. We have poured ourselves on that object of affection, and inasmuch as we have poured ourselves on that object we have become that object, so that

the object is the only thing valuable in the world, and the Self is destroyed completely. The greater the love for an object, the deeper is the cut that you deal to the Self, so that the person who is merged in unprecedented affection for any object does not anymore exist as a human being. That person has ceased to be, the Self has become the object, the Atman has become the un-Atman, to repeat again, consciousness has become matter. Life has become death. It is not for nothing that we say that this is the world of death, *mrityuloka*. This is called the world of destruction, transiency, death and oblivion and darkness, and what not, as mystics and theologians tell us tirelessly. This is not the world of life, this is the world of death. Why is this the world of death, because the Self has to die first, in order that it may live in the object. And if any of us continues living in the object outside, to that extent we are dead. So we are not wholly alive, partially we may seem to be breathing as vegetables, but entire life does not seem to be bequeathed to us, since part of our life has gone to the object which we consider as inseparable from ourselves. Is there anything in the world which is inseparable from you, with which you have wholly identified yourself, or at least in a large percentage, or even in some small percentage? To that extent you are not the Self. The element of the non-Self has entered you, and that element of the not-Self has robbed you of the joy of the Self, and appropriated the Self to itself. The Self has become the not-Self.

What is the Self then? It is anything with which you have identified yourself. In technical language, we call this kind of self, *gaunatman*, a secondary and foisted self. An

‘object’ cannot ‘become’ you. The great Acharya, Sankara, commences his exposition of the Brahma-Sutras with a tremendous statement, an immortal proclamation, that the subject and the object are like light and darkness; they can never be in the same place, and the one cannot be identified with the other. Yet, we do nothing but that. We identify light with darkness, darkness with light, the subject must become the object in order that it may be an object of love. Love is nothing but the subject becoming the object. And Acharya Sankara says this cannot be, and we are saying that this has to be. So, here, we are in this world of terrific difficulties,—created by whom, no one knows. This *gaunatman*, this secondary self, is the object of affection and aversion, which are two sides of the same coin. What is the self that you are seeking, when you say, ‘I am after Self-Realisation?’ Let each one ponder deeply in one’s heart. What sort of ‘Self’ is it that you are asking for in your Self-Realisation? The ‘Self’, in one way, as I pointed out, is that with which you have identified yourself. Well, let it be there, and that is one aspect of the matter. Now, what do you mean by identification? Can you become something else? Can A become B? In the language of logic, A is supposed to be A, and A can never be B. This is the law of contradiction. If A cannot be B, you cannot be somebody else. How has it happened, then, that man has become other than what he is in his affections? How is it that he has found it necessary to seek his own Self in what is outside him? Where was the necessity? If the necessity is not there, affections cannot be in this world. Nobody can love anything, no contact of one with the other is possible. But

such a thing is seen, and it is very much there. How does identification of the subject with the object take place? And how does A become B? How does light become darkness? Very intriguing indeed! Such things cannot happen, but they must happen in order that the present type of life in this world may assume any meaning at all. If this is the meaning of our life in this world, you can imagine well what sort of meaning it should be. Is there any meaning in the way in which we are living in the world? It is not for nothing that Milton had to write such a long poem on the fall of the angel to describe this condition, and he has described only ourselves, not somebody else about whom we are reading. This *gaunatman*, this self that is outside, that which identifies itself, is actually incapable of identification. I cannot be anything other than myself. How can I be non-I? But I have to be non-I in order that I may have an affection for anything. So, the loves of the world are the transference of the Self to that which is not the Self, in a very artificially contrived manner. It cannot be a natural action. It cannot be natural because A cannot become B. And any attempt to convert the A that it is, into the B that it is not, would be an artificial whitewash and this artificing of A with B which it is not, is the whole business of life. All our adjustments and adaptations in life are the dovetailing of A with B, while such a thing can never be. Hence, this is not the Self that you are seeking in Self-Realisation, when you say, "I want Self-Realisation." How would you be satisfied with a contrived Self-Realisation, connived condition in an artificial projection on a screen, a shadow of a substance? The Self that you see in the object of your

affection and love and attachment and identification is the shadow that is cast on the screen of the Self, and no one can be satisfied with the possession of a shadow. Hence, loves and hatreds are meaningless propositions of the mind in being happy in this world. This is one part of the story, this drama of life in this world—search for the Self.

Everyone is made up of the Self only in this world, nobody wants anything else. When you ‘want’ something, you are asking for your ‘Self,’ and nobody else. It is nobody else because it is identified with you and thereby it has ‘become’ you. The intensity and the percentage with which it has become you is also the percentage of the Self which is there. So, this is a kind of Self-Realisation, indeed. But when a seeker, a *sadhaka*, a searcher of Truth, says that he is after Self-Realisation, is this the kind of Self that he is seeking, the mortal self of artificial identification with that which one is not? Naturally, no sensible person will say that this is the Self that he is asking for. So, it is not the *gaunatman*, the secondary, foisted self that we are in need of. It is not anything in this world that you are referring to when you want the ‘Self.’ It cannot be anything that is in the world because everything that is in the world is outside the perceiving consciousness. It is in space, in time, it is located somewhere and therefore it is an object and it cannot be a subject. Thus, when you say, “I want Self-Realisation,” you are definitely not asking for anything in this world; it becomes clear from this analysis. It is not something in this world that you are asking for; what else are you asking? There is nothing else that you can conceive in your mind. If this is not the world that I want, and when I say, “I want

Self-Realisation,” I am not asking for anything in this world, what on earth am I asking for? Well, you may say, like a child, “I am asking for my own Self.” This is a child’s answer. Why is it a child’s answer? Because it is involved in a great difficulty about which we have made some reference previously. When you say “my own self,” what do you mean? Here we come to another concept of Self, in philosophical parlance called the *mithy*Atman, or the false self. Whatever I have been telling you, all this is concerning the secondary self, the *gaunatman*, the objective self, the foisted, shadowed self in the world as things loved or not liked. Now there is another difficulty before us. While it is sensible to believe that most seekers are honest enough to realise that they are not asking for anything in this world when they want Self-Realisation, they may not be clear as to what else they are asking for. They have always something simple to say—‘it is my ‘within’ that I am seeking for.’ We easily say that the Self is within, and if the Self is not anything that is outside in the world, it has naturally to be that which is ‘within me.’ I have tried to explain to you last time how this idea of ‘within’ is very eluding; because we cannot easily know what we mean by this notion of the within. I repeat again what I told you last time. It is a ‘within’ every blessed thing, within me, within you, within X, Y, Z and A, B, C, D. So, inasmuch as it is within the sun and the stars and the moon and the earth and the human beings and this and that, we may say that it is a ‘withinness’ without a ‘withoutness.’ It is a kind of within, no doubt, because it is inside everything; accepted. But the fact of its being within everything precludes there being anything

without it. Hence, the word 'within' also is not wholly applicable to the concept or the notion of the Self. Therefore, it becomes necessary for us to be a little cautious when we say that we want the Self which is 'within.' What sort of 'within' are you thinking of, should be clear. You may ask me, why is this need felt for a clarification of this kind? The necessity arises because it is easy to slip into the trap of what psychoanalysts call an 'introversion' of the mind or, sometimes they even use a worse word, 'narcissistic introversion,' a purely western psychoanalytic term which has its own morbid implications, a locked-up psychic personality, limited to purely subjective psychic operations within the skull of one's own self, limiting the notion of the self to the operations within the physical body only. Carl Jung, the great psychoanalyst of Zurich, made a discovery indeed when he classified human beings into the extroverts and the introverts. This classification is not unknown to Indian psychologists. Patanjali has said this before Jung was born. However, we know this only when it became pronounced and announced to public knowledge by psychoanalysts of this kind, who belong to the circle called 'analytic psychology'.

While we may be austerely and religiously guarded from identifying our objective in life with anything that is in the world, we may get into the cocoon of a self-centred limited notion of the self, and we may become introverts as opposed to what they call extroversion. This difficulty of a possible or apparent contradiction—in reality there is no contradiction—between the introverted and the extroverted attitude in life, this difficulty has also been the cause of the



war between what people call *jnana* and *karma*, knowledge and action. There are people fanatically clinging to the doctrine of anti-action, only knowledge, knowledge opposed to action. There are others who are extroverts, who believe not in any kind of ideational concept of knowledge, but believe in work, action, doing something materially, practically. We have the controversy between knowledge and action, *jnana* and *karma*, from ancient times, in India, and this is seen among mystical circles in Europe, also. Contemplation and action are the two sides of the proposition in spiritual outlook. Now, the Bhagavadgita, particularly, has been a great breakthrough in solving this problem of the apparent antagonism between knowledge and action. The Isavasya Upanishad has already mentioned it—it was earlier than the Bhagavadgita—when it said that *avidya* and *vidya*, two terms which it uses in one place, seem to be opposed to each other. While you are a great success and an achievement in your abrogation of attachment to outside things by renunciation, living the life of an ascetic or a monk, you may be caught by the introversion-complex where you may be a hater of things, a despiser of the world and a condemner of creation itself as an evil, and religious outlooks are not unknown in this world where the world is dubbed as Satan's realm so that you cannot look at anything in the world, you have to close your eyes to everything. This is one extreme. The other extreme is already mentioned—a total absorption in matter and destroying one's self thereby. Either way mistakes can be committed. While the *gaunatman*, or the externally

motivated objective self, is to be guarded against, we have also to guard ourselves against identifying ourselves with any kind of psychoanalytic, or, rather, psychopathological condition of introversion in the sense of pure physical subjectivity, because the 'Self' is not locked up in the body. So, you cannot say, I want the 'Self,' and I care a hoot for anybody else. This kind of statement loses sense in the light of the fact that the Self is not within one person only. The extrovert and the introvert conditions are ruled out completely in the true concept of the Self, because in this withinness of the Self, the withoutness is rooted out totally. It is not a going within as opposed to reaching without. When you go within yourself, it does not mean that you are going further from the world,—it is not. Both extremes meet finally. There is no distance in the Self. Moving within and moving away are words which have to be taken with a pinch of salt. They lose sense here, in this realm of distanceless existence.

What do you want, when you say, "I want Self-Realisation?" You will be finding yourself in a maze of difficulty, psychologically. I cannot complete this discussion today, because there is something else which I would like to say as an interim explanation of a difficulty which is the cause of our not being able to concentrate on the true notion of the Self. This interim difficulty, is our unpreparedness for this practice. We have been too very enthusiastic but unbaked pots, as people generally say, which cannot contain much water. The unpreparedness of ourselves for this task ahead consists in our subtle longing for empirical values in life, in the heart of our hearts. We

are, at the recesses of our hearts, not free from a little liking or interest in that which the Self is not. This little lurking, a feeling of 'why not have it,' 'let us have it if it comes,' this little root of the longing for that which the Self is not, the possibility of the rise of that, is the barrier before us. A complete conviction that the Realisation of the Self includes every blessed thing we call the joys of life is not easy to obtain. We have a subtle difficulty created by our own selves. What is this subtlety, you may ask me. Even the best of people cannot escape from this 'strait gate,' because somehow, some voice, whose voice we do not know, will tell us that we are losing something when we are gaining the Self. That is enough for us, and we do not want to hear anything further. I am losing something simultaneously when I gain the Self. And who would like to lose a penny, as it is a valuable something? Now, is there any penny-worth value in this world? We find not merely pennies but heaps of Pounds, and who can dare say that these values are not seen in life? No use merely saying, 'I see not,' for you see, and the heart has to say whether it sees or not. To what extent are you able to convince yourself that the values of the world are contained in the Self, and your asking for the Self is not an asking for that which is outside the world, thereby losing something of the world, but that which occupies everything in the world, contains everything that is in the world in a transmuted and highly rarefied form, so that the gaining of the Self is not a loss of the world, but a gaining of that which is more than the world? Who can become convinced to such an extent? Intellectually, rationally, philosophically we are convinced, but the heart

is a terrible friend and it is not going to listen to things so easily. Because fear grips us when we are encountered with the possibility of leaving this world of sensory experience. Death is a fright. Who would like to die? Why are we afraid of dying? Here is an example before us. To what extent we attach value to things here, to this body, and to everything connected with the body? Death is fearful. It is fearful because we lose a value, the greatest value, this body and everything that is related to this body, also. Where comes the Self here? Why cry for the Self? These are impediments on the way meanwhile, which they call the dross of the mind. *Vairagya*, which is always considered as a necessary prerequisite for Self-Realisation, is not to become a monk in the ordinary sense, or to become a nun. It is not a social change that you have to bring about in your outward conduct. Rather, it is a transvaluation of values within and the conviction of the reason that it has grappled actually the substance of the whole world in grappling with the Self is essential. When you grasp the Self, you have grasped the universe. Therefore, you do not lose anything that is worthwhile. Life and death lose meaning, neither life nor death has any sense, in this great universal adventure of the grappling of the spirit by the spirit, but this is a terror. Therefore, Arjuna cried: "Come down, come down, enough, enough, I do not want this any more. Whatever be this grand Form here, I had enough of it. I shall have the old thing only; please come down, O Lord!" Whatever be the majesty and the beauty and the grandeur of this goal before us, for a long time we cannot sustain it. We say 'okay,' but sufficient for the time being,—let us have a little

smaller thing also. These are the little calls of the smaller self within us. They may be little. But the finger which is not even half of an inch in breadth can, when it is placed before the eyes, obstruct the vision of the large orb of the sun himself. You will not be able to see the huge sun which is some thousand times bigger than the earth, merely because a little petty finger has been placed on the eyes. We should not be under the impression that these are small matters and little difficulties, and that we are above. We are not so easily above indeed. They are difficulties so annoying as a little sand particle on the retina of the eye. The unpreparedness of ourselves is due to the impurity of the psychic operations.

### CHAPTER 3

The Great Reality which is the object of everyone's quest is, according to accepted tradition, designated as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, a compound word in Sanskrit, suggesting a blend of the threefold characteristic of Ultimate Being. The ultimacy or the final character of the great object does not suggest incidentally a spatial remoteness of its existence or location. "Ultimately, what have you to tell me?" When you put questions of this kind, you seem to imply thereby a temporal sequence and a distance measured by the time-process. "Finally, what is the outcome of all endeavours?" Questions of this kind also make a suggestion of distance in time. "Then, what happens?" When you ask like this, you think of the measurable quality of time. It is long, it has a character of being spread out in space. But the Ultimate Being is not to be understood in this sense of ultimacy of temporal process or spatial measurable distance. Hence, when we use terms like the Ultimate Reality, we should be cautious in deciphering the import or the meaning of these words. The necessity to think only in terms of distance and process makes it incumbent on the human mind to measure the Ultimate Being also with the yardstick of available instruments of human perception. Ultimacy here is a logical ultimacy and not a temporal or spatial ultimacy. The logical completion of a process also is thought by us in temporal terms, like the educational process, for instance. The completion of the career of education from the point of view of the number of days that you may take to undertake this career, may be a temporal process. But education itself

is a logical process. One stage comes after another stage in logical sequence and order, not like physical steps that we take when we walk on the road. In this sense it is that we have to understand what the Ultimate Being is. Sufficient to say that it is an inclusiveness that we are referring to when we speak of the Ultimate Reality. It is not ultimate as the last end of a temporal process or linkage or a chain of developments. It is not the last link in the chain of movement from one state of being to another state. It is a logical completion of every process in a state of fulfilment wherein is to be found not only the movement, but also the path and also the traveller. It is all-engulfing perfection, in which the tentative assistance that we took from the activities through space and time gets transmuted into a non-spatial and non-temporal existence. Such may be said to be the characteristic of what the Ultimate Reality is, and it is, as I mentioned, called *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, in the Sanskrit language. This is what we are searching for. The words *Sat*, *Chit*, *Ananda*, as you are well aware of, indicate existence, consciousness and bliss. Here, again, we have to know clearly that existence, consciousness and bliss are not like the three legs of a stool. It is threefold, here, again, logically, and not sequentially, temporally, or spatially. It is not like the three ingredients of a cup of tea, for instance—there is milk, there is tea decoction, and there is sugar. *Sat-Chit-Ananda* is not like such a decoction of three characteristics, because whatever word or description we employ to connote the significance of this eternity, our words seem to fail and fall short of adequacy. While the Ultimate Reality is not a spatial or temporal distance to be covered by

movement of any kind, it is also not a threefold ingredient like the mixture of a physician. It is not a chemical compound—*Sat-Chit-Ananda*. What else is it? It is, here, a single indivisibility that is described as a threefold blend, as it were. It is True Being, *Sat*, existence. It is true existence, and not a processional existence of transient life we are accustomed to in this mortal world. The world in which we are living cannot be called existence, because it moves, it is in a process of evolution. Life is a movement from one temporal link to another temporal link in a succession we call growth, decay and destruction. Such is not this existence, because it is the finale of all these movements. It is, therefore, an existence which is not tending towards another existence. All temporal existence in this world is tentatively so, because it has the inherent trait of self-transcendence. There is growth, movement and what you call evolution. Thus, all phenomenal existence, all visible forms of life, should be considered as pointers to the Ultimate Existence, but they themselves are not to be designated as true existence. *Sat*, in this context, is Ultimate Existence, and, here, again, I have to repeat that to be ultimate is not to be spatially or temporally far away. It is a logical distance. So, this Ultimate Reality is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. It is existence, but it is an existence which is conscious that it is existence. It is not like a stone which is also, for all practical purposes, apparently an existence; it is there, but there should also be an awareness that it is there. I am existing as a person, but I have also a consciousness that I exist. Now, my being and my consciousness of being cannot be separated as two different isolated phases. It is



not that my being is somewhere and my consciousness of the fact of my being is somewhere else. My existence is the same as my consciousness of my existence. Hence, to be aware that one is, includes the 'is'-ness of that particular situation and 'to be' and 'to know' mean one and the same thing, quite different from the way in which we know things in this world. Here, in this *Sat*, or existence, which is consciousness, consciousness does not know existence as our mental consciousness knows objects of the world. When I say, 'I know that there is a building in front of me,' when I know there is some person here, or something is happening, I mean something quite different from what is to be understood here in this context of existence being the same as consciousness. Consciousness is not aware of the existence as I am aware of a table or a desk in front of me, because existence itself is consciousness. Now, the whole existence has to be consciousness, inasmuch as consciousness is incapable of division or partition of any kind. You cannot have a little consciousness somewhere and some absence of it somewhere else. The absence of consciousness in any part of existence is unthinkable, because the absence so called, imagined, has also to be a content of consciousness. To say that consciousness is not present somewhere in existence, it has already to be there. If it is not to be there, there would be no one to know that it is not there. Hence, a critical analysis of the circumstance of the nature of consciousness shows and demonstrates that consciousness cannot be absent anywhere, and even to imagine that it can be absent somewhere, it has to be there already. And such an argument would be begging the

question, as they say. Thus, all-existence is all-consciousness. This existence is ultimate in the sense explained, and it is to be distinguished from temporal phases of momentary existence with which we are accustomed in this world. Hence, it is all-existence and not some existence like the individual location here, there, in some part of the world, in space, in time. So, all conceivable jurisdiction of Reality is existence. Everything is existence and nothing can be non-existence, because the idea of non-existence is a self-contradictory notion. That notion cannot arise, because the idea of non-existence has also to exist. Hence non-existence is a word which conveys no sense. This existence, therefore, in the manner explained, is all-comprehensive, and there is nothing, there can be nothing, external to it. To conceive something external to existence would be to make it a link in the long chain of a developmental process, and it would then become a temporal existence and not the Ultimate Reality. Inasmuch as it has to be ultimate in its realistic nature, it has to be free from the limitation that can be imposed upon it by the introduction of space or time. Hence, it is all things, everything, everywhere and at all times. This all-existence is, therefore, all-consciousness. It is so because of the fact, as already mentioned, that it is incapable of division. Neither existence can be divided, nor consciousness can be divided. Now, while, for philosophical analysis, for the purposes of metaphysical disquisition, this much understanding of the nature of Reality is adequate, it is also added, for the satisfaction of the seeker of this great Truth, that it is also all-satisfaction, all-fulfilment, all-

happiness, all-joy, all-freedom, not knowledge minus happiness. It is not existence minus consciousness, and it is also not existence-consciousness minus happiness. One can exist with consciousness like a learned person, but very unhappy personally. Here, these three predicaments of limitation are ruled out. It is not temporal, located existence; it is all-existence. It is not unconscious existence but conscious existence. It is not merely conscious minus the sense of completeness, freedom, happiness, but it is that, also. So, it is existence-consciousness-bliss, not existence 'and' consciousness 'and' bliss. No 'and' is possible there, no conjunction. It is existence which is itself consciousness and therefore bliss.

When so much has been said about consciousness, we have again to be cautious that we do not locate it somewhere in space; because, to place it somewhere in space would be to make it a temporal object like anyone of us or anything in the world. Now, if this is the nature of the Ultimate Being, and this is the object of the quest of all life anywhere, it has also to be within everyone, inside the core of the electron and the atom it has to be. Inasmuch as it is indivisibility and perfection, as it is wider than even conceivable space and more perpetual than even conceivable time, it is designated as the Absolute, and is known, in the Sanskrit language, as Brahman, the plenum, the supreme perfection. Inasmuch as it is indivisibility, it is plenum, it is *Bhuma*, the all-encompassing completeness. Because of the fact of its being everywhere, it has also to be in the heart of everything, and so it is at the same time the Atman, or the Self of all beings. It is Brahman, and

therefore it is the Atman. It has to be the Atman because it is Brahman. Why is it so? Because of its all-pervading existence. As it is everywhere, it has to be within everything.

Now, I have to repeat some of the ideas I tried to express earlier on the preceding two occasions, that the concept of 'within' has to be clear to our minds. We are accustomed to think of 'within' buildings, within houses, within temples, within halls, etc., but the 'within-ness' of this Self, or the Atman, is not to be understood in this manner. This is a difficulty which will face anyone and everyone, one day or the other, in the pursuit of the meditational career. We as human beings, accustomed to think in terms of within-ness physically through enclosures of walls, etc., cannot but think of the Atman also as something within the body of this person. We touch our physical heart, chest,—”here, within me, is the Atman.” We cannot but think like this. The within-ness of the Atman is as difficult to understand as the universality of Brahman. I pointed out in meagre words that the all-comprehensive character of the Absolute, or the Ultimate Being, is not to be equated with spread-out-ness in space, or a lengthened duration of time, that it is durationless eternity and spaceless expanse. In a similar manner we have to be cautious in understanding what this within-ness of the Atman is. It is a word, again, having a logical significance, rather than a spatial connotation. Why is it so? The word Atman, which is translated often as the Self, implies the non-objective character of Brahman. It is consciousness, as was pointed out. Consciousness cannot become an object of someone's awareness. Consciousness cannot be known by

somebody else. Consciousness knows things but it itself cannot be known by somebody else; because, if that somebody is to be there as the knower of consciousness, then consciousness would not be consciousness, it would be an object, it would be limited. Objects are always limited because they are bifurcated from the location of the knower. They are distinguished from the percipient. But consciousness cannot be divided, because the concept or notion of division implies the presence of consciousness even in that divided or bifurcated space. Hence, consciousness cannot become an object. Now, inasmuch as consciousness is Brahman, the Absolute, and therefore cannot be an object, and inasmuch as also it is the Self, the Atman, of everyone, it cannot be the *known*, it has to be the knower. The within-ness of the Atman, or the Self, indicates only this much, that it cannot be known through any means of knowledge. There are no means known or available by which the Atman can be known. Nobody can know the Atman, nobody can know Brahman, because, if these are to be known, there must be somebody to know, other than Brahman and the Atman. Since it is impossible to even imagine anything outside Brahman or the Atman, there cannot be a knower of Brahman or the Atman. Then, what do we mean when we say that we seek the realisation of the Self, realisation of God, Brahman, the Absolute? How is it possible to know, realise, experience, be in union with Brahman, or the Atman, if it is not possible to know It through any means available?

Yes, it is not possible to know the Atman through any available, known, empirical means of perception. Not by

perception, not by inference, not by any known logical process of knowledge can It be contacted or experienced; because all logic is an externalisation of the knowledge process. And, as this Brahman, this Atman, which is identified with consciousness, cannot be an object, It cannot also be an object of logical understanding. And all our knowledge happens to be logical; therefore, nothing with which we are acquainted in this world can be considered as adequate to the purpose. This also sums up the situation of modern learning as an inadequate means of the knowledge of Reality. Then, how do you know this great Being? What actually is meant by knowledge of God, Brahman, Atman? It is not someone knowing Brahman, someone knowing the Atman. This has become clear because there cannot be someone outside It. Now, are we, seated here in this hall, a part of It, outside It, inside It, or where are we? These questions also should not arise. We cannot say that we are part of It, because It is partless. We cannot say we are outside It, as outside It nothing can be. We cannot say that we are inside It, for It has no such thing as inside in a spatial or temporal sense. What is our relationship with It? There cannot be any relationship. We have now found ourselves in a particular position, where we seem to be requiring a new system of education by which the unknowable can be known, by means which are not available anywhere in the world. Contactless contact is contact with God, says the great Acharya Gaudapada, the Grand-Guru of Acharya Sankara, in one of his passages. He says that even Yogis are frightened to hear all these things, what to talk of other people. We get frightened as children

are frightened in a place where they can see nothing. This is an analogy that is given herein. If you see a baby crying in a place where nothing is outside it, you will know that it is crying merely because of the fact that there is nothing outside it. It is not frightened by the presence of anything; it is frightened by the absence of things! So, the consciousness of the seeker is frightened and taken aback by the possibility of there being nothing outside it. While it is understandable that we can be frightened with things outside, it is understandable as to how we can be frightened by an absence of things. The reason is the togetherness of our consciousness with temporality and process. We are so much tied down to empirical process and hectic activity through transient methods of living that we cannot understand what the ultimate existence is. Why was Arjuna frightened at the vision of the Almighty? Arjuna represents anyone of us, the *jiva*, the individual seeking knowledge, experience and contact of the Reality. But it wants to contact the Reality without losing 'itself'. The difficulty arises here, and here is the crux of the whole matter. The fright or the fear that is referred to by the great Acharya, or that which we can see even in Arjuna as we have it in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita, is consequent upon a subtle insecurity felt before the Almighty-Inclusiveness; insecurity because 'I am perhaps not to be in His presence.' It has to be, and I cannot be. If That has to be, I cannot be, and why should I not be? All love is love of the Self, finally. The fear of death is the greatest fear and the love of one's own life is the greatest of loves. We struggle hard, sweat through the brow, only to

exist in this body. Not to lose this body, lose this individuality, lose this ego, lose this personality, is the last thing we can conceive. And Arjuna's fright is nothing but the fright of the salt doll in the presence of the mighty ocean which it is trying to enter. It may melt, it will not come back. The impossibility to come back, again, is a fear. We want to travel, not that we may not return, but that we may see a thing and then come back. So, we are tourists even to God. This concept of going and coming, having an experience and then being what we were once again, is the malady of human thought. Impurity of the mind is the cause behind these difficulties and fears.

The knowledge of Brahman, or the Atman, is not the knowledge of Brahman, or the Atman, by 'someone else'. It is the knowledge of the Self only. Says Arjuna here: "Lord, You know Yourself through Yourself, only. Nobody else can know You." For, that somebody who is trying to know God is inside God. The difficulty will not leave us still. Where are we, then! Though it has been explained, the question should not arise for reasons that should be clear. If He is to know Himself and nobody else can know Him, where, are we? Such question should not arise because this has already been answered when it was said that He 'is,' and that 'is'-ness is inclusive of every other existence, including our existence, mine, yours. His knowledge of Himself is not to be confused with any kind of separatist knowledge distinguished from our knowledge of That. Hence, we can very well imagine why the means of knowledge available in this world are not sufficient here. All available means of knowledge in this world are knowledge pertaining to that



which knowledge itself is not. When you know a tree, the tree is not the knowledge of the tree. knowledge is the process of knowing, coming in contact in perception; the tree itself is outside the process. But, here, the object of knowledge is not outside the process and, therefore, processes of knowledge are inadequate for the purpose of contacting God. What are the means? The Self is the means, and when we say the Self, we mean the logical inwardness of that which is all-comprehensive. This knowledge of That is by That only, which includes us all. It is to be attained by the melting down of all extrovert impulses of consciousness imagined in space and time. This is called self-control. This is self-restraint, this is *tapas*. Only a person endowed with *tapas* can afford to tread the path of God. A person who cannot perform *tapas*, this austerity, cannot touch the fringe of this problem.

What is *tapas*? We have curious notions of it, again, but it is principally a *tapas* of consciousness. We have no problems from the physical body or the physical world outside, though sometimes we imagine that these are the sources of our problems. The problem arises from an erroneous movement of consciousness. As there can be problems in the world of dream, we can manufacture a problem by the movement of consciousness as in dream, in a fashion which is not natural. We are in a waking condition now, our consciousness is free from the object of dream perception, and, therefore, objects of dream perception will not anymore bother us. But they certainly bother us when consciousness enters into that peculiar manufactured condition within its own self, called dream,

and things which are not there are seen to be there, and this, in one sentence, is the problem of consciousness—the pursuit of that which is really not there, as if it is the only thing that is there! When we are confronting solid objects, living beings in dream, we are honestly seeing them, perceiving them, contacting them and reacting to them, not as if we are in dream, but as one hundred percent in reality. There was a thorough mistake of consciousness in imagining that there were objects in dream, that it had to contact them, evaluate them, and react to them. The engagement of consciousness in contacting things which are really not there is the cause of dream; otherwise it would be awake. A similar thing is happening to us in the so-called waking state. The objects that we see before us are really not there. They are not there because they have been placed in this context of objectivity before a perceiving consciousness in the same way as consciousness places objects in front of it for contact in the dream world. The analogy of *tapas* may be made more clear from the instance of what our duty would be in dream in order that we may wake up into the reality of the consciousness of the world. The consciousness that is engaged in the perception of objects in dream has to be educated into the conviction that these objects are not there and therefore there is no point in even thinking of them. Then this is *tapas*. The consciousness has redeemed itself from apparent objects of perception and centred itself in itself. This centering of consciousness in itself is waking and the adoration of it as if it is outside is dream. Yoga is only this much. It is the pulling of consciousness from apparent objects of what we

call the world of sense-perception today, and *tapas* need not necessarily mean torture of the body. It is an education rather than a punishment. It is an evolution organically rather than any kind of imprisonment of consciousness into beliefs and convictions to which it is not accustomed. The great admonition of the Bhagavadgita, here, is very pertinent. Yoga, religion, spiritual practice, or the pursuit of the path of God, is a healthy, living movement in eternity rather than in time. It is a growing process organically, and, there should be no pain for a child to grow into an adult, as it is totally natural, even imperceptible. The movement to God is like the movement of a baby to the condition of an adult. The baby does not move by vehicles or by walking with its feet; it is an organic growth from a lesser completion to a wider inclusive completion. Even so, God-Realisation is not a movement to some place. It is neither movement outside nor movement inside. When a child becomes an aged individual, it has not moved outside, it has not moved inside, it is in itself only, yet its dimension has increased, it has become organically more inclusive, and its awareness has become more complete. The way to God-Realisation is an increase in our logical dimension, in our capacity to know, rather than doing something, running here and there,—nothing of the kind is spirituality. It is a dimension of being that enlarges itself by an inward withdrawal of the erroneous movement of consciousness in the direction of things which are really not. Why do you say that things are not? You may ask me, “I see the world outside, there is a thick wall in front of me, how can it be said to be non-existent?” Nobody says that it is not there.

The world is there, as everything that is seen in dream is inside the mind of the dreamer, but the 'is'-ness of the object, the wall in the front, or the world external, is to be taken in its proper position. The world exists, but does not exist outside consciousness. The idea that the world of dream is external to the perceiving consciousness is the cause of the dream world being a harassment. The world is very much there, but it is not outside consciousness. Why should it not be outside consciousness? Because, we have already decided that consciousness cannot be divided into the subject and object, it cannot be partitioned into bits here and there. It is an inclusive being and, therefore, even that which consciousness perceives, knows, is included in consciousness only. Thus, our mind pursuing sense-objects in any way, whatsoever, is a blunder. This blunder is to be taken care of. And austerity, spiritually speaking, *tapas*, is the restraint of consciousness from erroneous movements in emerging circles of outward externality, space and time, and the centring of it in itself, which is the Atman, and which is Brahman. There is neither an outside nor an inside, but an everywhere-ness, minus the limitations of space and time. Such is the grand objective we are in search of. And you need not ask me where it is, because you would have seen clearly before your mental vision where it is. You need not also ask me, how it is possible. This also will be clear to you, of its own accord, when you know where it is. When it is clear to you as to where it is, you would also know where you are in this context. And when you know where you are in this relation to yourself, you would know how to contact it, also; because the basic question has first

to be answered—what it is. And if this is clear, everything connected with it also becomes clear. Hence, caution is to be exercised even in our pious enthusiasm to pursue the path of God.

## CHAPTER 4

To feel that one has everything even when one is alone—this conviction may be regarded as a sign of spiritual progress. Mostly, we feel lonely when we are alone, as if we are discarded persons, and we seek company of people, we befriend others; and the lesser the relation we have with people, the smaller do we feel ourselves to be, and our dimension seems to expand in its importance by the largeness of our social relations. This is usual human feeling. But, the path of the Spirit is different from the path of ordinary human nature.

There is a tremendous departure, one can observe, that the path of the Spirit makes from the path of normal social living. Spiritual life is not social life. The two are different things. Many a time, in modern days, the one thing is mixed up with the other. A socially well-placed personality and a recognised individual need not necessary be an example of spiritual advancement; because the Spirit is lonely. It has no friends, and it is lonely in a very special connotation. God is lonely Being in an important sense—this seems to be so. God has no friends, He has no companions, He has no ‘second,’ He has no ‘other,’ and the movement of the soul towards God is naturally a participation in this great ‘Aloneness’ of the Supreme Being. Very ticklish is this matter, because the aloneness of divine experience cannot be compared in any way with the aloneness that an unbefriended, forlorn individual feels in the world. When a person has nobody, that person is alone. It is not in this physical, social, empirical sense that we have

to understand the loneliness of God. There are many aspects of this peculiar spiritual condition called loneliness. When we are distressed due to circumstances of any kind prevailing in the world, we often feel that we better rid ourselves of communication with people. A person who is in deep sorrow does not speak, he does not eat, he does not want to have talks with anybody. He wishes to be alone, and why does one feel satisfaction in being alone in a state of total loss and social helplessness into which one may land in the course of history? Why should one feel happy in being alone when there is bereavement, loss of property and death of relations? "I have lost everything, don't speak to me!" This is what one would offer as a rejoinder, and there would be no desire to speak to anyone afterwards.

The disconnection of association forcefully brought about by events and social vicissitudes also kicks a person down into this condition of a feeling of joy in aloneness, though of a negative type. There is a loneliness at the root of everything in the world. In a very important sense, we may say that the social concept is an anomaly in the structure of the universe. The universe is not a society; though we may look at it as a society of interconnected parts. But, this fact has to be stated with great caution! Is not our body a society of limbs? Certainly, so. Yet we are single, lonely persons. A human being is not a society of the limbs of the body. The many parts of the body are not friends of the person. The mere existence of variety need not necessarily mean a society operating. So, in spite of the tremendous variety in creation, creation may not be a society. It may be a single person, a 'sole' being, one

individual, *ekam sat*, one alone, not a conglomeration of many people. I mention this example. Many a part of this physical body does not make it a society. I do not feel that I am a heap of parts sitting here. I am alone, and there is a struggle in every part of this creation to maintain its individuality, a state of aloneness. This concept of aloneness is hard to define. It operates in the various levels of human life. In social and political circles, even under family circumstances, we find the maintenance of an individuality by people, and nobody would like to merge into another's body, because the reasons for this dislike to lose oneself in the personality or individuality of another will be well known to anybody. We maintain a status of our own. There is a struggle for the maintenance of individuality and isolatedness by everything in the world, in spite of the collaboration and participation that seems to be operating among parts in society, in family, in an organisation, in the universe. Again, to come to this example, in spite of the tremendous cooperative activity of the parts of my body, I am still not a bundle of parts. I am something quite different from these parts. I am not even aware that the parts are there.

So, this universe may appear to be constituted of tremendously variegated, multi-faceted parts; yet it is not a crowd of parts. It is one being in the same way as my soul animates this tabernacle and makes me feel that I am one, I am alone, and I am not merely a presiding principle over a heap of particular parts of the body. In a similar manner, there is the Soul of the universe which is 'lone' existence, and the variety of creation does not in any way preclude its



being the alone, unbefriended eternity. And this aloneness is what we call the Self, the Atman, the deepest core of the spirit in all living and non-living entities in creation. We do not come to this world with friends, nor do we go from this world with friends. In a very stark realistic fashion we are robbed of all the associations when we depart from here. Reality shows its teeth when we are called to quit this world. The nakedness of fact, we may say, comes to relief at the time of the call of the individual from this realm. And in that very condition, almost, one comes also into this world. The beginning and the ending of things is supposed to decide, to some extent, the character of things in the middle also. As we came, and as we go, so shall we also be in the middle; but how come that we are quite different in the middle? Quite apart in every manner from our beginning and from our end, how do we seem to be living in a different fashion? This is why they say that the world is an illusion before the eye of the perceiving mortal.

The consciousness of social association, which is a descent of consciousness into a false relatedness to external particularities, has to be absolved from this condition, and raised to the status of a larger aloneness. It is true that there is a sense of finitude and grief associated with any limited form of existence. We wish to have friends because we have a notion that our being gets widened, its dimension increases due to this association with persons and things. Finitude resents to remain in that condition. Every finite struggles to overcome finitude, and birth and death also may be said to be processes of this struggle of the limited to overcome its limitations. The love for social relation and

love for property and wealth, love for position in society may be considered as an erroneous movement of the spirit to fulfil a pious wish of its, namely, the breaking of the barriers of finitude. But the barrier of finitude is not broken by relating one finite to another finite. We do not become large persons merely because we have many friends. This is a false notion. Even the whole world of friends cannot make you a big person. Lo, you are the same limited little individual!

The attempt of the finite individual in overcoming its finitude by associations with finite persons and things is futile. It will not mean anything in the end. What the finite requires is not association with other finites, because a finite's association with a finite, nevertheless, is a finite condition only. Finitude persists even in a multitude of finitudes. Association of finitudes is not anything more than a finite. Hence, no man can be happy in this world. The reason is simple. The happiness that we seek is only in the overcoming of our limitations, in every level and in every aspect of our existence. The search of the spirit within us is for universal existence. This is the one thing that it asks for. There is no bread and jam that Spirit needs. It needs no friends, it does not want any association. It has no needs of any kind, it has a need for itself only, and here the path of spirituality differs from the path of social organisation, social recognition and renown. But one can easily slip into the mistake of imagining that social largeness and dimension is in some way near the infinitude that the spirit is seeking. One has to ponder calmly, in leisure, over the fate of each one. Everyone has to find time

to discriminate in this manner. “What is it that I really seek, and what is wrong with me? Why do I roam about here and there and maintain a restless condition throughout the day? What is the trouble with me? What is it that I seek in the end?” These questions one may put to oneself, and this search for the supreme aloneness manifests itself many a time in a distorted form of personal greed and a vehement attachment to one’s own benefit. Selfishness which is so much resented and condemned everywhere is a devilish distortion of the love for aloneness, because a greedy, selfish individual has this crude form of desire for that kind of aloneness which excludes the realities of other persons and others’ needs. So, again, the caution has to be exercised that any kind of social rule cannot be applied to the Spirit. Nothing that seems to be applicable to the social existence of people can apply to the realm of the Spirit. Here is a different law altogether. But, how could we enter this realm of what we consider the Spirit, which is a super-social, super-individual, and therefore indivisible, self-complete Being? How could one reach that condition? One cannot think of any other way than sincere delving into one’s own Self which one may call meditation, self-analysis, or devotion to the ideal of life. Seriousness is the hallmark of success on this path of intricate striving for that which one cannot see with the eyes. We see only human society and particular things and our sense-organs see only that which is totally anti-Spirit. Inasmuch as our perceptions are sensory, the spiritual sense, which is not the working of the sense-organs, does not seem to have been awakened in us adequately. Our logic and argument is mostly sensory and

we are likely to feel elated in our social success, and imagine that it is a spiritual success. One need not be identical with the other. The glory of the world need not necessarily be the glory of a saint. That is another thing, altogether. The saint has none, but he has everything.

I began by saying that our success and our progress on the path of God may perhaps be ascertained by the extent of the completeness and fullness and satisfaction we feel in ourselves when we are alone, and we do not feel miserable when we are lonely. Do we feel wretched when nobody speaks to us, and there is none whom we can speak to? Do we feel neglected when we have no property to possess, when we have nothing except a strip of cloth on our body, and nothing to keep for the morrow? Do we feel dejected or rejected as if we are nothing? But this is the part of the sorrow that leads to the glory and joy of the Spirit. There is a peculiar spiritual sorrow, which realm one has to tread before the glory of God, or the joy of the Spirit, is tasted within. Though the path of the Spirit is a joyous one indeed, there is also a terribly disciplinary precondition which saints many a time describe as an anguish of the spirit. The word occurs in mystic scriptures and it is mentioned in the interior circles. The anguish of the soul for God may look like a poignant sorrow, but it cannot be compared with the mortal sorrow of the men of the world. There is nothing comparable in this world with the operations of the law of the Spirit. Thus, a complete reorientation of the outlook of our consciousness may be called for in a sincere treading of the path of God.

## CHAPTER 5

We have heard it said many a time that the world is more like a dream than anything substantial in itself. This is repeated again and again in scriptures of various religions, and even poets seem to agree that this world is made of such stuff as dreams are made of. The dreamy character of the world consists in a peculiar activity of consciousness in its perceptions. This we call life in the world. The excursions of consciousness have to be outside itself in order that they may present a variety before itself. You have to listen to me very carefully here, in this little analysis of the activity of consciousness.

The experience we call life in this world has necessarily to be spread out in its various diversities, in its externality of presentation, or outwardness of contact; else it would not be what we call experience, at least it would not be what we call the world. Now, in order that an experience of this type of a projected phenomenon be possible, consciousness has to move out of itself into the realm of its contents of experience. But consciousness cannot move outside itself. This is what we would have understood by our reflections and studies. There cannot be any such thing as the movement of consciousness outside itself, inasmuch as it cannot have an outside. That it cannot have an outside is something which we would have by this time made clear to our own selves, because, to be aware of an outwardness of oneself, one has to move from oneself to that which we considered as outward. If we have moved out of ourselves into another that we call the world of experience, that

‘another’ has to be bridged with our own selves by a phenomenon we call relational contact, perception, cognition, and the like. In other words, there should be a sort of gap between ourselves and the content of our experience in order that the content may become what we call the world. If we are sticking to the world as the skin is sticking to our body, we would not be able to visualise the world. But this is impossible and it cannot be, because the consciousness of a gap between its own self and its content has also to be conceived by consciousness only. There cannot be a gap in consciousness, it cannot be cut into pieces. It cannot engage itself in this drama of a world, unless it is nothing short of a dream experienced within itself. It is a dream because such a perception is logically inexplicable. It is inexplicable because the experiencing consciousness in its experience of the world has to become other than what it is, in order that it may be experiencing the world, which certainly is not its own self. *We do not take interest in the world because of its being our own self, rather we take interest in it because it is not ourselves.* Here is a little philosophy behind the worthwhileness of our activities. All our adumbrated encounters in the world seem to be based on a conviction that the world is totally different from us. If there was a suspicion that it is vitally related to us, we would be in a state of automatic withdrawal of interest in everything. This is the background behind the injunction that self-control is necessary, *tapas* is to be practised, in order that the True Self may be realised.

This seems a world of dream because of the reason mentioned. It is a contradiction in terms to say that we

know the world and yet it is not 'we'. Such a presentation is necessary in order that we may delight ourselves in the perception of things in the world. Most of our delights are characteristic of unrealities like the picture which we eagerly run to visualise in a cinema house, though it is only a shadow that is dancing on the screen. But it has to be a shadow, else its beauty will not be there, because real personalities will not attract us so much as their camouflaged pictures. The beauty of the sunrise and the sunset, the grandeur of a painting—perceptions of these types are coloured with a little bit of an illusion before consciousness; otherwise beauty cannot be perceived in the world. The attraction that consciousness feels in regard to things outside, gross or subtle, beautiful or otherwise, is the peculiar placement of these objects in a location that would fit into the particular type of limitation in which consciousness is involved at any given moment. 'Any given moment' is something to be emphasised, because we would not be attracted to a thing always, throughout our life. Also, we cannot be attracted to everything at the same time. So, there seems to be a psychological intervention of our own selves in the reading of meaning in the objects of the world, and that alone can be tasty which will fit into the particular lacuna of our psyche, and, incidentally, of the senses, because the two go together.

So, what you call taste, including beauty, sweetness, etc., is the filling of the gap in a particular structural pattern of consciousness at a given moment of time, and not always, so that there is nothing, and there can be nothing which we can like always. Nothing can be sweet always, nothing can

be beautiful always. It can be so only at a particular time, even ugliness is not a permanent feature, because when beauty goes, ugliness also goes.

Thus, the whole pattern of our experience of life in the world seems to be a sort of metaphysical aberration of our own selves, a type of abnormality that has crept into consciousness, and at a special level we should say that the whole world is abnormal in the sense that it cannot know either its own self or the nature of that which it considers as worthwhile and real. Sometimes poets consider the world as a madhouse where everyone is equally crazy with a uniform intensity of error of perception, and there is no one to recognise what has happened. The unnaturalness of the movement of consciousness in the world of objects becomes patent when we realise that such an experience cannot be explained on the nature of consciousness itself.

I am here today not to speak of the dreamy character of the world, which is a philosophical theme, but to place it as a kind of background to pinpoint attention on a practical aspect of spiritual living called self-restraint, self-control, the withdrawal of oneself into oneself. Here, I shall not repeat, once again, what I had pointed out earlier, namely, what this 'oneself' is, or what 'within' is, or 'without' is. The reason behind the necessity to restrain oneself should be obvious by this time, because, in the usual experience of the objects of sense and mind, we have necessarily to lose ourselves in a world of conceptualisation only, abstraction and visualisation of a mirage-like presentation before us. It has to be mirage-like because there is a concoction attempted by consciousness in making itself a localised



percipient of a widely spread spatio-temporal world of objects. It cannot have a world of objects in front of its own self, accepting that division of consciousness into the percipient and the objects of perception is not permissible under the nature of things. This would mean that every value we attach to everything in this world is an error in the reading of meaning. There is a total and fundamental mistake which we seem to be involved in, even when we glory in the grandeur of the world, of the objects of sense, and we seem to be such rulers, emperors or possessors of the treasures of life. May be these treasures are the treasures of dream and they cannot be substantial and real for the reason already noticed. As long as we have taste for things which are estranged from consciousness, we are in a world of dream. And who has not got this taste? The taste referred to may be of the eye to see colours and shapes, or of any other sense-organ or of the mind to dance to the tune of these sensory presentations, and of the ego to prepare a bulwark for fortifying the stand taken by the mind and the senses in this tremendous activity in a world of their own perceptions, their cosy dream. Why are we happy in this world of dream, at least why is it that we seem to be happy? Why do we not cry it out and beat our breasts from moment to moment as if hell has descended upon us; why is it that this does not happen? How is it that, somehow, we seem to be acquiescing in the nature of things as they are presented to us through our senses! This, again, is a trick of consciousness, because a sense of reality has to be foisted upon even shadowy things in order that they may assume any meaning, like the picture in a cinema. Here is a

substanceless dance of shadows, but if it goes on telling our mind that it is only that, how can one take an interest in it? It has to be told that it is not that; it is another thing altogether. It is not a two-dimensional shadow, it is a three-dimensional substance. When this conviction is driven into the mind, it sees beauty, meaning and value in what it visualises, in spite of the fact that the mind is picturing what is other than what it understands it to be. There is a lot of mystery in this world, and we cannot call it by any other name. There are secrets which do not seem to be accessible even to the best of our understandings. There are, indeed, more things in heaven and earth than philosophy dreams of, than our religions can tell us, than books can describe. These secrets have to be maintained as secrets only and they should not become public objects of observation, because, then, their importance vanishes. A thing that you know very well does not attract you much. That engages your attention wholly, which you cannot really understand, and which eludes the grasp of your understanding. The world is attractive because we cannot understand it. If its secret is known threadbare, through and through, there would not be a moment's rest for us in this world. It is only for the discriminative faculty of understanding that life is not worth its promises, at least life as we appreciate in the present condition of our mind and the senses. The world does not kick us as a ghost or a devil, as an ugly creature, but presents itself as a marvellous beauty because of the movement of consciousness in a very specialised manner. The beauty and the meaning and the value of things in the world is not in the things themselves,

just as, to come to the analogy once again, it is not merely the reflection or the shadow on the screen that attracts us, but it is a peculiar juxtaposition of our mental operations and optical behaviour with the structure and movement of the shadows that gives us the impression of a tremendous meaning there. Many things are necessary in order that we may see a value in a moving picture. Our minds have to be conditioned, the senses have to be placed in their proper location, a suitable distance between the object and ourselves, also, has to be maintained, we cannot strike our nose on the screen and then visualise the picture. Also, there is a peculiar optical arrangement due to which we cannot recognise that it is a two-dimensional presentation. A similar illusion is attributed to the three-dimensional world of length, breadth and height. There are no lengths and breadths and heights in this world, even as there is no depth, or solidity, or spatial expanse in the picture on the screen. But the idea of a three-dimensional projection is driven into our minds. Have you not heard people telling us these days, though we do not know what actually they are speaking about, that this three-dimensional world is only a shadow cast by a four-dimensional reality! This three-dimensional solidity is the shadow of a trans-empirical something which cannot be visualised by our three-dimensional perceptive mind. The mind cannot have access into this fourth dimension, which is like the *Atmnan*, or the *Turiya*, we speak of, because the mind is a three-dimensional operation of consciousness. It is bound to space and time. Therefore, the mind cannot conceive anything which is not spatially or temporally bound. We

are completely bound, head to foot, by this entry of the vehement operations of space and time into our perceiving capacity, the consciousness operating as it does now.

In this condition, how would we realise truth? Where comes the methodology to recover ourselves and place ourselves in that context of what reality is there, above these shadows, these three-dimensional solidities, externalities, objects, and the like. We cannot, usually, expect success in this attempt, because our attempts are mostly operations of the mind, and the mind is a friend of this very intruder, the space-time complex. Hence, the usual operations of the mind, the accustomed procedures of understanding, would not be of adequate utility in this regard. This is the reason why saints and sages speak of the need for the performance, the exercise of *tapas*—self-control. An easy-go-lucky life is not the way of self-control. Many a time, control of the self, or restraint of the self, is wrongly interpreted and translated as ‘mortification’. *tapas* is not that. *tapas* is discipline. It is the regularisation of the movement of consciousness. It is the systematisation of the activity of consciousness. It is the streamlining of the *movement of our own selves*. Hence, it is to place ourselves in a precisely calculated position, wherefrom we can have the vision or the vista of our True Self.

*tapas* has to be properly evaluated and understood. All spiritual exercise or spiritual discipline is *tapas*. This Sanskrit word, *tapas*, has many a connotation. One of them is that it is the process of energising our system through the heat of self-restraint. So, *tapas* may also mean the energy-heat that we develop in our own selves through the

introversion of the power of the will by redeeming it from involvement in the activity of externalisation in the world of perception.

It would not be easy to conceive the procedure of this self-control, much as we are accustomed to the normal way of thinking in terms of objects only. The withdrawal from the objects of sense that scriptures and religions speak of is a very subtle procedure. It is not a withdrawing from some place to another place. It is not even withdrawing oneself from some *really existing* meaning to another *conceived* meaning. It is not a withdrawal of our attention from really existing things in the world into abstractions of consciousness. It is a different thing altogether. There is a little bit of hint given to us in a verse of the Bhagavadgita, towards the end of the third chapter, where we are suggested that we should not take lightly this difficult task of self-control. It is a hard task and the problem behind it is made clear by this verse of the Bhagavadgita, when it mentions that the senses and the mind can be disciplined and restrained only in the light of the structure of the Highest Self. The visualisation of the pattern of the true nature of the Self would be a strong support in our adventure of self-control, because the senses are strong indeed. The strength of the senses is known to everybody. They are so powerful that they have succeeded in making us believe, one-hundred-percent, that the world of externality is the only reality. One can imagine what strength they have.

But the mind is superior to the senses, though, mostly, the mind acquiesces in whatever the senses convey to it,

and does not bother to investigate into the reality of these sensory presentations. It merely takes the evidences of the senses, collects them into a synthesised picture and agrees as to the reality thereof. However, this is not the end of the whole matter. There is a ratiocinating faculty within us, a discriminative power, an understanding or a reason which can be applied and has to be applied even after the mind has synthesised and practically accepted the evidences of the senses.

This is the work of the philosopher, and here is what we call “*manana*”, reflection over the fact of experience after collecting evidence through various sources, by perception, by inference, by study, and the like.

But, the senses are turbulent. Control of the senses is like binding wind and thrusting it into a briefcase. You cannot succeed in this attempt. Wild is their impetuosity and loud is their roar and clamour in this world of longing. They will shout at the top of their voice and drown the little music of the soul, and the mind, mostly, does not bother; it does not want to take much of a pain. It is only a confirming feature in us of what the senses present. But the reason is going to be of assistance. Of course, the reason, too, does not bother much. Mostly, it is also an idle witness, a spectator, an onlooker of what the mind is saying and the senses are reporting. This acquiescing reason is what we call the lower reason, the investigative reason is what we call the higher reason. Even now we are exercising our reason in some way. When we work in this world, in any field of our occupation, we apply our reason, or understanding, no doubt, but it is the lower reason; lower because it works

according to the judgement passed by the mind on the report of the senses. The investigative faculty does not always operate and we do not even feel the need to exercise that higher faculty. This necessity will arise only if we face insurmountable difficulties in life, so that nothing can satisfy us and we seem to be cornered from all sides. The investigative understanding, or the higher reason, will be able to proclaim the non-utilitarian character of experiences in this world in terms of the senses and the ordinary mental cognitions. What is the function of this higher reason? It is the ambassador of the Spirit. It is the voice of the higher reality within us. It is the light shed by the Atman, though it is not itself the Atman. It is to be considered as most proximate to the Atman, the Self, inasmuch as it is the integrating faculty in ourselves. The dissipating character of sense-activity is restrained by the higher reason which sees a unifying meaning behind even these distracting presentations of the senses. The world is entirely a field of scattered particulars. You do not see an inch of unity anywhere in anything in this world. Everything is different from everything else. But the sense of belonging, the feeling of cooperation, and the insight into the presence of some unifying factor in life, arises on account of the operation of the higher reason which reflects the ultimate unity of the pure Spirit. If that were not to be present and active, we would be like pieces thrown in different directions and there would not be anything to connect one piece with another piece. There would then be only discrete particulars without anything to cement them into an organic completeness, or a beautiful presentation. A

very cryptic statement in the Bhagavadgita says that the support of the Atman is necessary in order that the senses may be subdued. *We cannot abandon lower desires unless we gain something higher than what the lower desires promise.* We cannot lose both the golden axe and the iron axe at the same time. We will not be happy about it. Initially, there is a feeling that the joys of life are abandoned in the act of self-control. This feeling of isolation from the delights of sense will be made good and compensated adequately by the larger delight of the grasp of something superior to the delights of the senses. This is what the Bhagavadgita means when it says that, finally, you will have to resort to some speck of the reflection of the Atman in order that you may subdue the senses. No one would be agreeable to become a total fool or yield to anyone thoroughly, root and branch, and even the senses would not agree to that; the senses will not permit themselves to be utter slaves of this procedure you are adopting, called self-control, but they yield provided a higher satisfaction is visualised by them. This higher satisfaction is the controlling power. The faith in God, or the vision of the presence of a higher being, would be the strength that we have to exercise in the subdual of the otherwise impossible sense-organs. The violence of the energies through the channels of sense can be diverted intelligently, but not checked with any unintelligent force.

Spiritual life, therefore, is something to be lived cautiously, like the work of an engineer who harnesses powerful flow of waters or constructs meticulously unsupported bridges across wide rivers. It is not a fool-



hardy attempt but a wisely conceived mathematical and logical procedure. We have to understand, first of all, what it is that we are aiming at in order that things may be clear to us as far as the restraint of the senses is concerned. The difficulty would be with our own selves. What for is this self-restraint? What good will come out of it? We will speak thus to ourselves, though, by listening to the need to restrain oneself, we may be tentatively, though reluctantly, made to agree to this proposal. You know that anyone who is convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. So, if you can convince the senses against their will, they will naturally tell you, 'Yes, we seem to be convinced, but;' they will add a 'but,' and this 'but' is a dangerous clause that they will project due to a little difficulty they will feel in wholly accepting this advice.

“Do you want that we should totally ruin ourselves, lose ourselves, die in the name of what you call a discipline!” Who would like to dissolve oneself in total annihilation? Nothing can be more fearful than death, and if you are expecting the senses to die in order that something else may be achieved, it is better to know that nobody will be prepared to die for your satisfaction.

Now, this is not merely, a humorous story about the attitude of the senses, but a practical difficulty which one could feel even under the best of circumstance and the most cautious exercise of understanding. 'After all, there is something,' so the voice will speak. Did not Buddha hear this voice? He did hear. That situation, which the voice pointed out, would be the very same thing we too may visualise before ourselves, namely, the value we attach to

things which the consciousness contacts, perceives, enjoys. The senses are eagerly waiting for this moment of weakness on the part of the mind and the understanding so that they may jump upon you from the ambush and catch you unawares. A starved sense is more violent than a satisfied one. Hence, like a river in spate that may break through anything if a little passage is given, the senses may break the whole personality into shreds and drown it in sorrow if proper care is not taken in this arduous adventure.

Unless a positive substance is under your hold, a negative withdrawal will not succeed. Hence, self-restraint which is the spotlight of spiritual practice is not negative in the sense of a withdrawal of one thing from another thing; it is rather a gaining of even the lower dimension in an entry into a wider realm of reality than the one in which we are at present.

Self-restraint is a gain, rather than a loss. It is to be possessed of larger values and meanings and satisfactions and delights than the ones we are now acquainted with in this world. So, the senses need not be awed at this suggestion of restraint. If you lose one dollar, the consequence of that loss would be the gaining of one million dollars, as in a lottery wherein you may lose one dollar because you purchased a ticket, but may gain one million. The gain of one million is a greater satisfaction than the sorrow caused by the loss of one. Actually, there is no loss of even one dollar. That, too, would be to say very little. It is all gain, positive, throughout.

In the process of self-restraint, nothing is lost. It is a complete gain; it is a move from the lesser reality to a

higher reality. Self-restraint is of pre-eminent importance in spiritual life. The greater the extent of self-restraint, the more proximate is the Goal of Self-Realisation.

## APPENDIX: ON THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is not a theory but a vision of life (*darsana*). It is not merely a 'love of wisdom' but signifies a real 'possession' of it. The philosophers are, therefore, not professors, academicians or doctrinaires, or even spectators, but are true participants of life in its real meaning and relationship. To be a philosopher, thus, implies more substance than what is often taken to be its value in life. A philosopher is not concerned with human beings alone; his concern is with all creation, the universe in its completeness. His thought has to reflect the total import of existence in its togetherness.

A philosopher's task calls for a great strength of will and clarity of understanding, side by side with an exalted moral consciousness. The usual prerequisites for a student of philosophy have been stated to be:

1. *Viveka*, or discrimination of reality as distinguished from appearance.
2. *Vairagya*, or disinterest in those appearances which are divested of reality.
3. *Sama*, or tranquillity of mind.
4. *Dama*, or self-restraint, meaning control over the clamours of sense.
5. *Uparati*, or freedom from the distractions characteristic of selfish activity.
6. *Titiksha*, or power of fortitude in the midst of the vicissitudes of life.
7. *Sraddha*, or faith and conviction in the meaningfulness of the pursuit of philosophy.

8. *Samadhana*, or ability to concentrate the mind on the subject of study.
9. *Mumukshutva*, or a sincere longing to attain the practical realisation of the Absolute.

Without the equipment of these necessary qualifications, a student under the scheme of philosophy will be a failure and cannot get at either its method or its purpose. Though the discipline needed is arduous indeed and no one, ordinarily, can be expected to fulfil it to perfection, it has to be accepted that it is an inviolable condition of the pursuit of philosophy, at least in an appreciable measure. Else, philosophy would only shed as much light to the student as the sun to the blind.

Philosophy has often been identified with a life of contemplation, without action. That this is a misrepresentation based on ignorance would become obvious from the nature of philosophic wisdom, as has been stated above. Though wisdom is a state of consciousness and implies concentration and meditation, it does so not in any exclusive sense, for philosophic wisdom is all-inclusive. It synthesises the different sides of the psychological nature, e.g., the knowing, the willing, the feeling and the active sides. Any lopsided emphasis is contrary to the requirements of the wisdom of life. The teaching of the *Bhagavadgita*, a monumental embodiment of the gospel of the philosophic life, is a standing refutation of the notion that philosophical knowledge is tantamount to actionlessness. A philosopher, in his heightened understanding, has also the power of sublime feeling and action for a universal cause.

Philosophy is also not opposed to religion; on the other hand, it is the lamp which illumines the corners of religion both within and without. Philosophy supplies the *raison d'être* of religious practices, even of ritual, image and symbol. If religion is the body, philosophy is the life in it. Philosophy ennobles religion, sublimates art and stabilises the sciences, such as

sociology, ethics and politics. It was the hope of Plato that the philosopher and the ruler be found in the same person, if the world is to have peace. Philosophy is also the remedy for the illnesses which psychoanalysis has been immaturely attempting to trace back from a supposed irrationality of behaviour. Philosophy discovers the rationality behind the so-called irrational urges.

In India, philosophy as *darsana* has always been associated with practice, or *sadhana*. What goes by the name of yoga is the implementation of philosophy in practical life, with reference to the psychological functions predominating in an individual. Philosophy has, therefore, more relation to one's being than to one's intellectual grasping of outer situations. The philosophic truth is neither merely the inner nor the outer, for it is the whole. The cosmic gets mirrored in the consciousness of the philosopher who lives it more than anything else.

Philosophy is different from any kind of extreme, whether in thinking or in living. The golden mean is its rule, which excludes nothing but includes everything by way of transformation to suit the constitution of the whole, which is its aim. To arrive at this finale of knowledge, it considers cases by perception, inference and intuition—observation, implication and the testimony of experience. It neither denies nor affirms peremptorily. Philosophy is, thus, necessary to make every stage and kind of life a joy. There is no satisfaction where there is no meaning. Philosophy is the discovery of the meaning behind life.

Philosophy is impartial judgment without prejudice, without underestimation or overestimation. It recognises the values accepted in the different fields of knowledge and iterated in the various viewpoints of observation and logic in order to construct an edifice of integral envisagement. From this it follows that philosophy does not take sides, that it has a place for every standpoint of thinking in its proper perspective, and that its

function is to fit everything into its broad scheme so that nothing is either ignored or made to strike a dissonant note in the harmony of its development. Its position is that of the chief judge in the government of the universe. It listens, understands, sifts, weighs and considers the status of any given circumstance—not from the standpoint of the circumstance in its isolatedness, but in its relation to the whole of existence. No one can, therefore, afford to turn away from the divine gift called ‘philosophy’.